

A Guide for Parents

Services to Children, Youth & Their Families under the
COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT
in the Fairfax - Falls Church Community

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Introduction...

If your child is under 18, or in some cases, under 22*, and has, or is at risk of having serious emotional or behavioral difficulties, you can get help through the Virginia Comprehensive Services Act (**CSA**) for At-Risk Youth and Families which provides assistance to children and their families in need of services from multiple agencies.

This handbook describes how you can get help through the **CSA** in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

Youths aged 22 and under who are eligible for special education and whose Individualized Education Program (IEP**) requires education in a private school or residential placement are eligible for **CSA** services until the last day of the school year when they turn 22.*

The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)...

In 1992, the Virginia General Assembly passed the **Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth & Families**. This act is intended to improve efforts to meet the needs of families with children and youth who have or who are at risk of having serious emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The goal of the **CSA** is to keep families together and to provide services within the community whenever possible. Through teams required by the **CSA**, state and local agencies are brought together to provide services that will:

- *Preserve and strengthen families*
- *Identify needs and help families as early as possible*
- *Provide services in the least restrictive setting possible*
- *Create services to meet the specific needs of children and youth*
- *Increase the communication between families and county agencies*
- *Encourage public-private partnerships in serving families*
- *Provide more community control and flexibility in the use of funding.*

Who receives services under the CSA?

Youths who *may* be eligible to receive services fall into one of two groups:

Mandated...

- Those for whom services are legally mandated to be provided. These include youth in foster care or those who have an Individualized Education Program (**IEP**) that requires the youth to receive education in a private day or residential school.

Non-mandated*...

- Those who are targeted for services, or who are given priority for services. Most are youths placed through the courts in private or public facilities or non-residential programs.
- Those who are eligible for services because they have emotional or behavioral difficulties that have lasted a long time, are very disabling and require services beyond usual agency services; and/or
- Those who are eligible for services because they are currently in, or at risk of entering residential services.

**These youth are not legally required to receive services but may be served out of limited CSA funds when available.*

Who takes part in the CSA process?

The act requires that the following human service agencies work together to implement the **CSA** in the community:

- *Department of Family Services*
- *Fairfax County Public Schools*
- *Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board*
- *Department of Health*
- *Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court*

In addition to these agencies, *Parent Representatives*, many of whom also have children with emotional or behavioral difficulties, are appointed from the community. Above all, your involvement is extremely important and welcome.

Teams working together...

In each community, various teams are working together to implement the **CSA**. In the Fairfax - Falls Church community, these teams are the:

- *Child Specific Team (CST)*
- *Family Assessment & Planning Team (FAPT)*
- *Community Policy & Management Team (CPMT)*

The following information describes each team and how it functions.

Child Specific Team (CST)...

The **CST** is an ongoing team formed to help you problem-solve, explore resources, and plan for the changing needs of your child and family. Membership on the team is flexible according to your child's needs and should include:

- *You*
- *Your case manager*
- *Your child, when appropriate*
- *With your permission, representatives from other public agencies who could suggest or provide services*
- *Anyone familiar with the strengths and needs of your family, including teachers, counselors, clergy, doctors, supportive friends, and others.*

What you can expect from the CST process...

You are a respected member of this team, and will have an important voice in decisions regarding your child. As a member of the team, you should...

- *Exchange important information among all team members regarding your child*
- *Ask questions and receive as much information as possible about services, programs and resources for your child and your family*
- *Ask for explanation of new or unfamiliar words and phrases.*

Together with other team members you will develop a service plan known as an **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** to meet the needs of your child and your family.

The **IFSP** is a written plan that includes information about the strengths and needs of your family and child, professionals involved with your family, services that have been provided, and services that are being recommended.

If it is determined that your child will require services funded through the **CSA**, then you will be referred to a **Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)**.

Family Assessment & Planning Team (FAPT)...

If the needs determined by your Child Specific Team meeting cannot be met through regular agency services, then you may be referred to a Family Assessment and Planning Team. Family Assessment and Planning Teams are made up of six appointed members:

-- *Parent Representative*

and representatives from the following agencies:

- *Department of Family Services*
- *Fairfax County Public Schools*
- *Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board*
- *Department of Health*
- *Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court*

What you can expect from the FAPT process...

Every effort is made to hold the **FAPT** meeting at a time that is convenient for you. Since **FAPT** meetings take place in locations throughout Fairfax County, you may request a location closest to you. You may also bring a friend along for support. Accommodations are made for persons needing special arrangements such as interpreters.

When you attend a **FAPT** meeting, the leader of the **FAPT** or the Parent Representative will explain the process of the meeting, tell you about your rights, and introduce you to everyone in the room, which may include observers. You have the right to have the purpose of observers explained to you and to decide whether you want them to stay. Everyone in the room will sign a confidentiality statement.

Your meeting will last approximately 60 minutes. Your case manager will present your child's case to the **FAPT** and make recommendations as to what services are needed. After that, you and your child (if attending) will have the opportunity to discuss your concerns and add any information that you think is relevant to this process. Then others involved with your child may wish to add further information.

After open discussion of the information presented, services requested, and resources available, the **FAPT** decides which services are most appropriate, and may make amendments or recommendations to the **IFSP**. The **FAPT** then decides the services that they will approve*.

Decisions are made by general agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached, a vote will be taken from the six members of the **FAPT**, the case manager and the parent or legal guardian.

At the end of the meeting the team leader will

- *restate the plan and goals to make sure they are clear*
- *review everyone's responsibilities*
- *and set a service review date.*

You and your case manager will receive a copy of all forms used in the **FAPT** meeting. Services agreed upon may not begin until you give written consent, unless ordered by the court system.

CSA funds are limited for non-mandated youth (see page) and are not always immediately available for **FAPT approved services. If funds are not immediately available, your child will be placed on a ranked or prioritized waiting list. Your **FAPT** may suggest and approve alternative services while you wait for requested funding to begin.*

How is a case reviewed?

Each case that comes before a **FAPT** must be reviewed, with review dates set at the **FAPT** meeting. Reviews may occur at any time from 3 - 12 months, depending upon the type of services approved. It is important to advise your child's case manager of any significant events or changes. **CST** members will continue to meet with you as needed to ensure the helpfulness of your **IFSP**.

What happens if you do not agree with the FAPT?

At the **FAPT** meeting you will be given a document explaining what to do if you do not agree with the recommendations of the **FAPT**. Appeals are heard by the Community Policy & Management Team (**CPMT**). All letters of appeal should be addressed to:

*Chair, the Fairfax-Falls Church **CPMT**
c/o **CPMT** Staff
12011 Government Center Parkway
5th Floor
Fairfax, VA 22035*

Community Policy & Management Team (CPMT)...

This is a policy-making team that oversees the implementation of the **CSA** and makes all **FAPT** appointments. This team oversees funding, helps agencies to work together and hears appeals on **FAPT** decisions. It is also responsible for implementing new legislation that affects the **CSA**. Members of the **CPMT** are appointed by the local governing body of Fairfax County, and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. Members include:

- *Deputy County Executive for Human Services*
- *Director, Department of Community & Recreation Services*
- *Director, Department of Family Services*
- *Director, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board*
- *Director, Department of Health*
- *Director, Office for Children*
- *Director, Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court*
- *Representatives, Fairfax County and
Falls Church City Public Schools*
- *Representatives, cities of Fairfax and Falls Church*
- *Two Parent Representatives*
- *Two representatives reflecting the cultural diversity
of the community*
- *Two private service providers*

Who pays for CSA services?

The Commonwealth of Virginia and your local government contribute significant funds to the **CSA** services. However, as of January 1996, Virginia law also requires you, as your child's parent or legal guardian, to contribute toward the cost of some services based on income and other factors. Your case manager will discuss this with you in more detail and will assist you in obtaining the forms you will need.

Who to contact with questions...

When you have questions about the **CSA**, please contact your case manager. It is the responsibility of the case manager to coordinate services and exchange information with you.

If you do not already have a case manager, call Fairfax County Human Services at **(703) 222-0880** and they will help you get started in the process.

What happens in an emergency?

If you believe that your child is in need of emergency services contact your case manager. If your case manager is unavailable, contact your local mental health center or Woodburn Emergency Services for help

with emergency assistance. (See list of important phone numbers on page 13.)

If your case manager arranges to begin services on an emergency basis, your family's and child's needs will be presented to a **FAPT** within 15 days after the services begin.

Important phone numbers...

Alcohol & Drug Services	(703) 359-7040
Community & Recreation Services	(703) 324- 4386
Department of Family Services	(703) 324-7500
Department of Health	
<i>Fairfax</i>	(703) 246-2411
<i>Falls Church</i>	(703) 534-8343
Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court	
<i>Fairfax</i>	(703) 246-2495
<i>Falls Church</i>	(703) 241-5099
<i>Mt. Vernon</i>	(703) 360-1001
Mental Health Services	
<i>Northwest Center (Reston area)</i>	(703) 481-4100
<i>Woodburn Center (Annandale, Fairfax, Falls Church area)</i>	(703) 573-0523
<i>Mt. Vernon Center (Route 1 area)</i>	(703) 360-6910
Mental Retardation Services	(703) 324-4400

Falls Church City Schools & Fairfax County Public Schools...

Please call your child's school and ask to speak either to the school social worker or school psychologist.

After-hours or emergency numbers...

Alternative House (emergency shelter for adolescents)	(703) 641-9840
Emergency Mental Health Services (24 hours)	(703) 573-5679
Police	911
Child Abuse Hotline	(703) 324-7400

Your CSA phone numbers (case manager, CST Team members, etc.)...
